

REMARKS

The present application was filed on March 30, 2000 with claims 1-16. Claims 7 and 14 have been canceled and claims 17-20 have been added. Claims 1-6, 8-13 and 15-20 are pending, and claims 1 and 10 are the pending independent claims.

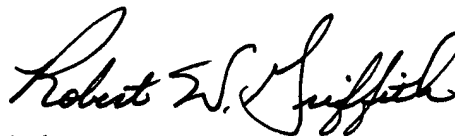
In the outstanding final Office Action dated June 17, 2004, the Examiner rejected claims 1-6, 8-13 and 15-20 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,199,102 (hereinafter "Cobb") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,640,301 (hereinafter "Ng").

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in view of the following remarks.

With regard to the rejection of claims 1-6, 8-13 and 15-20 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Cobb in view of Ng, Applicants assert that the Ng reference is not valid prior art. In a response to an Office Action filed on June 24, 2004, a declaration under 37 C.F.R. §1.131 was filed establishing a conception date for the present invention at least as early as April 2, 1999, and due diligence until filing of the application on March 30, 2000. The Examiner indicated that the filed declaration was acceptable in an Office Action sent on September 29, 2004. Therefore, Applicants have established a conception date for the present invention that is earlier than the filing date of the Ng reference, July 8, 1999. Thus, while Applicants assert that claims 1-6, 8-13 and 15-20 are patentable over the combination of Cobb and Ng, Applicants request removal of the Ng reference as prior art.

In view of the above, Applicants believe that claims 1-6, 8-13 and 15-20 are in condition for allowance, and respectfully request withdrawal of the §103(a) rejection.

Respectfully submitted,



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Robert W. Griffith
Attorney for Applicant(s)
Reg. No. 48,956
Ryan, Mason & Lewis, LLP
90 Forest Avenue
Locust Valley, NY 11560
(516) 759-4547